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harmony with his subjective mood. He is not, however, one of that meretricious ilk, who, having nothing to express, endeavor to cover their spiritual nakedness by ragged and dirty webs of foliage and vapid effects, forever and ever repeated, and supposed to be poetic idealizations. In each one of Inness's works there is a special feeling embodied which gives it a marked individuality, albeit through all there runs the lyrist's monotone; in each one of his more imaginative pieces, as in "Over the River," "Passing Shower," and many others that might be named, there is a distinct moment of nature apprehended and given in all its totality and unity. This he effects by the individualizing power of genius. Every part adds its note in swelling the general consonance.

Yet, perhaps, Mr. Inness would be still greater, if, without losing his subjective warmth, he could go more out of himself and survey nature more objectively. He seems to us to regard nature as symbolical simply, as having no other artistic use than to suggest by her multitudinous phases the aspirations and strugglings of the human soul. But this is not the only view of nature, not, perhaps, the highest. Infinity lies in, not simply beyond, created things. In all the vital lines of tree-growth and grass-growth that, seen near at hand, soothe and satisfy and impart to the distance an associated warmth, the infinite Life resides; nature has thus an absolute value as inseparable from the Infinite. She is not the mere *tabula rasa* upon which the divine inscriptions are written, but, rather, the ever-changing yet imperishable body of the divine Soul.

We shall not particularize the pictures of this collection for the purpose of special criticism. In discussing the works of genius a method should be employed quite other than that which is proper in relation to works of talent. In the former case we should seek to find the standpoint of the artist, to reach the key-mood of his mind; thus we are able to define the limitations of his genius, and we shall not fall into the error of blaming him for not doing what the Divine Fate never bade him do. It is this method of criticism that we have sought to employ in respect to the works of Inness.

In conclusion we beg to remind our readers of the sale on Wednesday night. Mr. Inness's works will, we do not doubt after the artist's death, be eagerly sought after; they will be pointed to with pride as evidences of American genius. Let it not be said that his unappreciative countrymen waited for death to consecrate his genius.

GERMAN OPERA—ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

The German Opera Company, under the direction of Mr. Leonard Grover, gave their first performance at the Academy on Tuesday evening, April 17th, to a not very numerous audience. Every place of amusement suffered severely by the stoppage of the railroad cars. It was clearly understood that there would be no conveyance up-town after seven o'clock in the evening, so those who had far to travel stayed at home. We are within the mark when we say, that the opera suffered the loss of at least one thousand dollars.

Gounod's beautiful opera, "Faust," was performed in a very intelligent and earnest manner by the artists engaged, the choruses were admirably performed, and the orchestra was very complete in its personnel and played smoothly and effectively.

Madame Retter is a very painstaking and excellent artist, but it is impossible to connect her

with the character of Marguerite. Neither in person nor manner does she fill out the character. Her personation is too mature, and her voice has lost all its spontaneity, the upper portion only retaining its brightness, while the middle and lower tones are weak and not clear.

Still we must award her praise for the earnest manner both of her acting and her singing. Mlle. Dziuba personated the character of Siebel very gracefully, and sang her music very feelingly.

Franz Himmer, the Faust of the evening, has a fine voice and sings with passionate expression. He makes too constant a use of his head-notes, and thus weakens the force of his expression, but his reading of the music is eminently artistic.

Hermans is beyond dispute the best representative of Mephistopheles that we have yet had in New York. His voice is magnificent, his method is excellent, and his acting is characteristic and spirited. The artists all made the mistake of striving too much, and used their voices up to a certain extent before the close of the third act.

SECOND NIGHT.—On Wednesday night the opera of "William Tell" was performed by the German Opera Company. This opera is the grandest of all Rossini's compositions, and like his "Il Barbiere," has stood the test of time and criticism in every country. The overture has been adopted as one of the few concert overtures wherever grand orchestras are gathered together. The opera itself is rich in every class of dramatic music—solos, duos, trios, ensemble pieces and choruses—all of which are models in their respective forms—and have hardly been excelled in pure melody, constructive beauty, and masterly treatment. The instrumentation is richly varied, and the color is dashed with that freedom and brilliancy which characterized the sparkling genius, the keen, ready, and comprehensive mind of the great maestro, Rossini.

There were some points about the performance of this opera that can challenge any previous representation. The overture was played with such precision, force, and spirit, and such attention to delicate coloring and contrast, that it won a determined and enthusiastic encore. The choruses were simply the finest we have ever heard on the Academy stage. In the great Ruetti scene, the three choirs were sustained by the members of three German singing societies, with whose names we are not familiar, the Helvetia, Wolfsschlucht, and Froshelm, but they sang magnificently. We have never heard finer chorus singing on any stage, and the performance was so manifestly admirable that it aroused the audience, which crowded the Academy from the parquet to the amphitheater, to the highest enthusiasm. It was, indeed, a performance worth coming fifty miles to hear, or make a solitary walk to Harlem endurable. The choruses all through were equally excellent.

The principal singers sustained themselves most successfully. Madame Retter shone to far higher advantage in Mathilde than in Marguerite, singing her music in a thoroughly musical way, and acting with great spirit. Mlle. Dziuba was also good. Wilhelm Fornes is a most excellent artist. His voice, though it lacks somewhat in volume, is sweet and pure in tone, and he sings with spirit and emphasis. Himmer, the tenor more *grazia* than *forza*, and consequently rather overmatched by the rôle, seemed inspired by the great music, and the crowded and brilliant audience, and sang really admirably. Mr. Weinlich, who took Herman's part, he being sick, acquitted himself unexpectedly well. He sang in such a musicianly spirit that we could excuse the absence of Hermans. To the conductor, Mr. Neuendorff, we must award unqualified praise. He is a young man, but he shows the making of a fine conductor. The manner in which he kept the orchestra and the huge chorus in hand showed a mastery and con-

trol over his material which but very few in his position possess.

The third night of Grover's Opera Company was signalized by the production of Boildieu's light and pleasingly melodious opera, "La Dame Blanche." Our good citizens know no more about Boildieu than they do of Gretry or Cimarosa, and as they have no acquaintance with the gentleman or his works, they do not evince any strong desire to pay him a visit. The consequence was the house was scarcely a quarter filled. We can only say that those who were present exhibited much better taste than those who stayed away, and were more than repaid for risking their chance with an unknown (to them) composer.

The music is of the highest possible character. It is well constructed, the melody is sprightly, if not flowing, it has passages of much beauty, it is effectually harmonized and delicately and brilliantly instrumented. The ensemble pieces and the choruses are pleasing, clever and effective. Taking it as a whole, it is a work well worth hearing, and will, we assure our readers, improve on each successive hearing.

The artists who sustained the principal characters, Mme. Johansen, Mlle. Dziuba, Messrs. Habelman, Steinecke, and Weinlich, who took the rôle allotted to Hermans, acquitted themselves in the most satisfactory artist-like manner. They were all in capital voice, they sang *con amore*, and acted most spiritedly. The opera throughout was warmly applauded, and very deservedly, for in addition to the excellence of the principals, the choruses were admirably sung, and the orchestra was ably directed, and played with care and spirit.

CONCERTS.

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

The fifth and last concert of the twenty-fourth season of the Philharmonic Society took place at the Academy of Music on Saturday evening last before a large and very fashionable audience. The programme was as follows: Symphony, No. 7 in A, op. 92, Beethoven; Scena ed Aria, op. 94, "Infelice," Mendelssohn, sung by Miss Maria Brainerd; Concerto, piano, in F, sharp minor, op. 1 (posthumous), Norburt Bergmüller, played by Mr. William Mason; Characteristic Overture, "Faust," Wagner; Aria from the Oratorio of Samson, "Let the bright Seraphim," Handel, sung by Miss Brainerd, with trumpet obligato by Mr. Diets, and Overture "Les Francs Juges," in F, Hector Berlioz. Carl Bergmann, Director.

This was the least interesting of all the programmes of the season. To devote an entire act to Wagner and Berlioz, with such hosts of unperformed works of known beauty and popularity in the library, is, to say the best, a positive error in judgment.

To hear the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven is, however, enough pleasure for one evening; it is one of his broadest and grandest conceptions. What a swing there is to those brilliant alternating scale passages for violins and basses in the first movement, and how effective that semi-close, where the wind instruments answer the single G notes of the strings, appearing to die away for many bars, then bursting into the brilliant finale. It is in these wonderful delays, where the ear is kept in extreme suspension, and then satisfied in a dazzling and startling manner, that Beethoven makes his most overpowering effects. The Allegretto is one of the most lovely movements in the whole range of his symphonies. It opens softly with the strings, then comes a delicious solo for the violoncelli, wonderful in the richness and fullness of its sound, followed by an exquisite subject sustained by the wind instruments, and leading into a flowing and lovely triplet passage for the violins, which was played with the perfection of one solo performer. There is nothing more beautiful in thought, expression, and effect, than this movement in any class of music. The presto is a sharp, bright subject, distributed in catchy points

for the various groups of instruments, very difficult to execute with exact promptness, but performed by this orchestra with wonderful decision, spirit, and accuracy. The singular effect of the holding note, now for the strings, and then for the brass, sustained through a variety of changing chords, culminating in a grand burst of the whole orchestra into the principal theme, is a thought grand and overpowering in its effect. The allegro con brio is a wonderfully bold subject for the violins, full of energy, and with a dash of seeming delirious joy. Its treatment throughout has all the variety and mastery of orchestral resources of Beethoven's best movement. The whole symphony was performed in a masterly manner. There were no weak points; the most delicate artistic coloring was manifest throughout, giving double point to the bold and massive effects. Perfect pianissimos were obtained, which lightened the fortes, and in point of delicacy, vigor, brilliancy, and precision, it would be difficult to find any orchestra that could surpass this performance. Miss Maria Brainerd was evidently laboring under the effects of a cold, and her voice though clear, was wanting in its accustomed volume. It was natural, then, that she should give Mendelssohn's grand and passionate aria "In felice," with less than her usual effect. Such music is at all times foreign to the character of her voice and style, for they require high dramatic power, and passionate, vehement utterance. In the lighter music of the classic school, Miss Brainerd has no equal in the city. She sang the aria, smoothly and with strict adherence to the text. In the second part she substituted for "Let the bright Seraphim," a Serenade-barcarole, by Gounod, to which Mr. Theodore Thomas played the violin obligato. This was pleasantly performed by both, but the composition is scarcely worthy of Gounod.

Mr. Wm. Mason introduced a concerto, a posthumous work by Norburt Bergmüller, which we very much regret was ever disinterred, for it is a most lugubrious addition to our pianoforte literature. It is, of course, a musician's work, or Mr. Mason would not have introduced it; but it is long and tedious, devoid of inspiration, without breadth or fire—in fact, it is common-place and small, and utterly uninteresting. The orchestral portions of the work have undue prominence, but they are far better treated than the piano part, which seems, indeed, rather an accessory than a principal. Mr. Mason played well; all his passages were clear and properly phrased, and he exhibited all the brilliancy which the piece allowed; but it was the regret of all that he had wasted his talent upon such an ungracious composition.

The two overtures, by Wagner and Berlioz, were splendidly performed, and two or three of the audience, who were a little hard of hearing, were especially delighted with the tremendous blasts of the brass instruments, in Les Francs Juges, feeling that such special emphasis was given as a delicate attention to their infirmity. Mr. Bergmann conducted the whole performance in a masterly manner. He has made the influence of his ability felt through the whole series of the Philharmonic Concerts, and the result has been to the entire satisfaction of the subscribers and the public. The orchestra has never maintained so high a pitch of executive excellence, and it is safe to say that the New York Philharmonic Society stands to-day more firmly in favor with the public than at any time during its existence, and, with fair business prospects, we expect the subscriptions will be larger in the coming year than they have ever been before.

CLASSICAL CHAMBER MUSIC.

The Fifth Soiree of Chamber Music was given at Dodworth's Hall on Wednesday evening, before a not very large audience, although a very critical one. The programme was as follows: Quartet, in C, No. 6, Mozart; Quartet, Piano, in E flat, op. 47, Robert Schumann; Quartet in F, op. 135, Beethoven. The performers were Wm. Mason, Theo. Thomas, S. Mosenthal, G. Matzka and F. Bergner.

Mozart's quartet is a beautiful composition, the andante cantabile being remarkable for its grave and exquisite sentiment, and for its rich and profound harmonies. The menuetto is a lovely, playful movement, full of contrasted effects, with trio in the minor, half sad, half playful. The allegro final is full of bold and startling effects, with pauses and sudden starts, and still replete with melody. It was generally well played, the andante being most observable for sentiment and artistic colorings.

Schumann's quartet for piano, violin, viola and violoncello, is a composition of general but unequal beauty. The first movement is free and bold in character; the scherzo is a weak or bald spot; the andante cantabile is very beautiful, characterized by passages in syncopation for the piano; and the last movement is a bold fugue, very much spun out with irrelevant matter, but treated in a wonderful manner all through. This work was finely played; albeit the temperature of the room rendered the intonations of the violoncello at times a little uncertain. Mr. William Mason executed his part with spirit and precision. He was in a playing mood; his touch was finely graduated; his passages were clear and brilliant, and his whole interpretation was musicianly, and worked by expression, decision and *brio*.

Beethoven's one hundred and thirty-fifth work was one of his latest, and gives painful evidence of an unbalanced mind, or at least of a morbid sentiment which has grown into a disease. It may, however, be maintained by those who admit of no faults in Beethoven's works, who worship him in all his moods, that its abstruse sublimity places it above the rules of criticism and beyond the comprehension of critics. We agree to both propositions, confessing that we can see no reason for its construction, and declaring that we could understand no part of it, save the few magnificent phrases at the beginning of the "lento assai," which are sublime in their beauty. The rest is a chaos of unfinished forms, dreary, dreamy, lugubrious—a succession of painful imitations, with discords carried to the point of agony, without any tangible result. It was curious to watch the faces of the audience as movement after movement of this dreary, unintelligible composition came on and passed away with but one spark of Beethoven's grand inspiration. It seems to us that Wagner commenced where Beethoven left off; that he has inherited to a certain degree the morbid and confused mind which afflicted the great composer in his last days. Wagner has certainly flashes of clear and brilliant thoughts, but Beethoven's one hundred and thirty-fifth work seems to have been his starting-point.

This work must have been well played to have rescued any clear points out of the tangled chaos. We trust, however, for the sake of these very pleasant soirees that no more of such works, which are at all events *caviere* to the multitude, among which we are included, will be placed upon the programmes. As curiosities it is well enough to attempt to master their obscurity in private, but it is poor policy to make the public swallow so distasteful a dose.

The sixth and last soiree will take place at Dodworth's Hall to-night, Wednesday, April 25.

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

The Fifth and Last Concert of the Ninth Season was given by the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society, at the Academy of Music, on Saturday evening, the 14th inst. The weather, which seems determined to thwart the best intentions of that Society, was wretchedly bad as usual, but still a large and brilliant audience of the very *élite* of the city assembled to listen to the closing concert of this popular Society.

The programme was as follows: Symphony No. 9 in D minor, op. 125, Beethoven; Aria, "O Mio Fernando," "La Favorita," Senorita Carmilena Poch, Donizetti; Violin Concerto No. 6 in A major, op. 70, Ch. De Beriot, Mlle, Matilda

Toedt; Overture, "Oberon," Weber; Bolero, I Vespri Siciliani, Verdi, Senorita C. Poch; Quartet for French Horns, Weber, Messrs. Schmidt, Lotze, Gewaldt and Moslein; and Overture, "Robespierre," Litolf.

Only three movements of the 9th Symphony were played, the fourth requiring a grand, thoroughly capable and well-trained chorus, and solo singers of the most exceptional excellence, to render it with proper effect. Each of the three movements—save a little wavering in the first, which, however, passed unheeded by the general public—received almost perfect execution, in that clear delineation of light and shade, and that satisfying treatment which this well-selected and thoroughly-competent orchestra has invariably shown during this season. This orchestra, in number, 66, is not quite so large as that of the New York Philharmonic, but the very best players are comprised in its organization, a large proportion of them being fully adequate to solo performances.

Weber's "Oberon" overture was superbly played; its tempo was just, and each movement was taken up with spirit and decision, and the delicate and spirited subjects were played with a precision, with a breadth and effect worthy of all praise. Litolf's overture, which is a clever and very effective composition was equally well performed, and the whole instrumental performance was every way worthy of the high reputation of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society.

The Quartet of French Horn produced less effect than any other number on the programme; not that any player was deficient, for the work was admirably performed, but the composition itself, though masterly, contains no element of sensation, and only appeals to a very refined musical sense, appearing to the majority of listeners rather tame.

Miss Matilda Toedt, who from a mere novice a few months since, has risen to the dignity of an artistic position, was the marked success of the evening. Her performance surprised and delighted every one. She exhibited a firmness and richness in tone, a delicacy and brilliancy of manipulation, a certainty of intonation, and a depth of sentiment and expression not to be expected from one so young. Her mastery of the instrument is remarkable, and with careful and intelligent study the way is open to her achievement of the very first position in her art.

Her performance was enthusiastically received, and the applause was so vehement and continued that the President of the Society brought her forward a second time, with the evident intention that she should accept the encore, but Mr. Bergmann adhering to the rule, "no encores permitted," denied her that privilege. Afterwards when Mme. Carmilena Poch, determined to take an encore, when the public did not ask for a repetition, Mr. Bergmann consented, evidently for the purpose of having a pianoforte played upon, which was not announced in the programme, but which he had placed in the Academy on his own responsibility and for his own private purposes whatever they might be. Such an instance of partizan favoritism, so publicly exhibited, is derogatory to the position of a conductor, and is sufficient to cause the public and individuals to lose faith in his sense of justice and his fitness for that responsible and exceptional position.

Miss Toedt, however, received a unanimous and hearty encore, although the acceptance of the honor was unjustly denied her.

It is reported, although the source from where the information is derived is of a more than doubtful character, that this excellent Society has failed to meet its expenses this year. If this be true, although we greatly regret it, we are not much surprised, for we know that its outlays are on the most liberal scale, no expense being spared in making its concerts worthy of the generous and hearty support of its subscribers. The Directors have done their work nobly, and their concerts have been so admira-

ble, that the Society now stands side by side with the Philharmonic of New York in every point of executive excellence. If it has sustained a loss, luckily it will be but little felt, as the Society has a large reserve fund, accumulated by its brilliant success in past seasons.

GRAND ORGAN EXHIBITION OF SACRED MUSIC.

The first of a series of concerts, in connection with Odell's new organ, took place at Irving Hall on the 15th inst. The stoppage of the rail cars interfered sadly with the attendance at all places of amusement, and this concert suffered from the same inconvenience. Mrs. Marie Abbott sang with Mr. Castle in Perring's charming duet, "How long wilt thou forget me, Lord," so tastefully and effectively that a unanimous encore was the result. We have rarely heard Mr. Castle to greater advantage; his beautiful voice was in fine order, and he sang with both power and expression. His solo, from St. Paul, and his duet with Mr. Lombard were received with signal favor.

Mr. Lombard's singing on this occasion fully justified the praise we recently bestowed upon him. He has a truly magnificent voice, and he uses it with much skill. He sings tastefully and expressively, and has a just feeling for dramatic effect. He was warmly encored in his duet with Mr. Castle, and also in a very charming song written for him by Mr. Geo. W. Morgan, to words by Barry Cornwall, which he rendered very beautifully. There seems to be assurance of a first-class concert singer in Mr. Lombard; such a voice as this has long been needed, and he will fully supply the need, if he continues to study diligently and intelligently.

Mr. G. W. Morgan played Bach's Fugue in G minor well, as he always does, but dry Fugues are not relished by the general public, being regarded as mere tests for players' ability to execute difficulties. The public cannot be blamed; they judge by the ear and the sensations, while the form, construction, and working of the Fugue, appeal solely to educated and refined musicians, who see in its apparent dryness the boundless resources of invention and science. Mr. Morgan's performance of Weley's Offertoire called forth a perfect storm of applause, and in reply to the encore he played "God Save the Queen," with brilliant variations for manuals and pedals. This is a masterpiece of execution, and was greeted enthusiastically. The overture of "Oberon," Weber, which closed the concert, was also finely played, the effects having been carefully studied and promptly produced.

GRAND CONCERT AT ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH.

The grand concert at St. Stephen's Church, given in aid of the building fund for the payment for the enlargement of the Church, was very largely attended, and as the price of the tickets was three dollars, a very handsome sum must have been realized. This church is admirably adapted to afford full and free production of tone both by voices and instruments, so that whenever artists who have been heard in the Academy—which is very unfavorable to vocal development—appear in St. Stephen's, the difference of effect is really wonderful, their tone being absolutely doubled, while they sing with perfect ease, and free command of color and expression. This was fully evidenced in the performances of Miss Adelaide Phillips, Mazzoleni, Bellini and Antonucci. We have never heard these artists to such advantage. Miss Phillips sang "He shall feed His Flock," with rare grace and expression, and two duets with Mme. De Lussan and Signor Bellini, most effectively. Mme. De Lussan, the soprano of the church, was in excellent voice, and sang the music allotted her in a manner worthy of warm praise.

Signor Bellini sang "E Morta" by Donizetti, and in the Lombardi trio, most admirably in all respects. He is an artist of high merit, and always commands respect and admiration. Sig-

nor Antonucci surprised every one accustomed to his singing in the Academy, with the rich, noble bass he poured out in lavish freedom that night, combined with a wealth of feeling and expression.

Signor Mazzoleni astonished the whole audience with his magnificent tenor voice, given out with a force which was electrical in its effect. It was entirely under his control, and he poured it out with wonderful volubility and power, giving to his performance varied color and deep expression, united to a perfection of phrasing and musical eloquence which we have rarely heard equaled. It was a performance which will not soon be forgotten.

Miss Stella Bonheur sang Verdi's Romanza, from "I Vespri Siciliani," with abundant tone, general truth of intonation, and a fair degree of executive ability. She has, however, much to learn in method and style. Mr. Henri Appy and William Berge, acquitted themselves well in their respective positions, and the concert was in every respect a marked success.

BLIND TOM.

The more we see and the more we hear of this negro boy, the more we are satisfied that New York has not learned to half appreciate him yet. The people do not comprehend how great a curiosity he is, nor how really wonderful what he accomplishes is under the circumstances. Here is a negro boy, blind, uneducated, with a brain very partially developed, with a manner more grotesque physically and more meaningless than that of a monkey, who not only plays compositions by the great masters with their executive difficulties and profound harmonies, but who extemporizes coherently, and can seize the form, the melody and nearly all the harmonies of a composition which he hears for the first time. We have witnessed trials of this remarkable effort of musician memory many times; we have heard Mr. Charles Fradel play his own compositions, which were not even written down, and which we only had heard, to Blind Tom, and have heard that strange being repeat them after him with so much exactitude and fidelity that we should have discredited our ears if we had not known that he could not have heard them before. We have ourselves tested him in the same way with the same result, in both cases only a few recondite harmonies escaping his acute ear and tenacious memory. We doubt if there are three professional men in the city who could support the test daily applied to Tom as successfully as he does.

It is, of course, as purely a gift as the power he possesses of individualizing the notes. Every tone is as much a fact to him, and as clearly distinguishable, as are the colors red, blue or yellow to those who can see. At any time strike a note on any degree of the scale, and he will tell its name instantly. Place a dozen hands upon the keys, each finger striking indiscriminately, producing seemingly an inextricable confusion of discordant sounds, and Tom, after reflecting an instant, will unravel the tangled web of sound, by beginning at the lowest tone struck, and naming, progressively and with unfailing accuracy, every sound that has been played. This is not merely instinct, and could hardly be learned; it is musical intuition, which, under certain conditions, could be molded to high art purposes. Even as it exists in him, it is a remarkable manifestation of musical capacity.

His general aptitude for music is manifested in his rapid acquirement of the command of other instruments, and his management of a voice as yet but scarcely formed.

In every point of view, Blind Tom is a curious and most interesting study. His performances are very entertaining, and an hour or two spent with him, will be passed very pleasantly. Almost every evening one or other of our best musicians drop in at Irving Hall to test Tom's powers of imitation and memory,

and no one leaves without being impressed by his singular gifts. If a professor who has played for him before, preludes on the piano, without speaking, Tom immediately says, "How do you do, Mr. —," for he recognizes the player at once by his touch, so sensitive and retentive is his ear. We are more than commonly desirous that Tom's concerts should have a pecuniary success, for the reason that every dollar gained, is something won for his present education and future support. Tom will give a concert every night this week at Irving Hall, and a matinee on Wednesday and Saturday.

BRISTOW'S OPERA OF "RIP VAN WINKLE."

It was the intention of Mr. Maretzek to produce Mr. George F. Bristow's opera of "Rip Van Winkle," at the Academy of Music, during the recent season. A great deal of public interest was excited by the announcement, for Mr. Bristow is everywhere popular, and is recognized as the leading composer in America to-day, in all the higher branches of musical composition. The disappointment at the non-production of this opera has been very generally felt and very warmly expressed, many people, of course, blaming Mr. Maretzek for want of faith, and for ignoring the work of an American composer. The facts are these: The opera had to be translated into the Italian language, and then adapted to every separate vocal part, principal and chorus. This was a work of time and the season had so far advanced before it was completed, that it was impossible for the artists to study their parts, or for the manager to get ready the scenery and necessary appointments before the close of the season.

Mr. Maretzek, with every intention to fulfil his promise, found at length that he was unable to do so, and communicated the fact to Mr. Bristow in a letter of which the following is a copy:

ACADEMY OF MUSIC, N. Y., April 13, 1866.

MY DEAR BRISTOW—When I proposed to you, three or four months ago, to produce your opera, "Rip Van Winkle," I was hopeful that I should be able to continue my season sufficiently long to admit of the proper preparation.

However, as "Rip Van Winkle" is now complete in its Italian form, I will bring it out at the earliest possible moment, in the season I hope to inaugurate in the Fall of the present year. From what I have heard of the music, I am satisfied that it will prove a great success. I am, my dear Bristow, very truly yours,

MAX MARETZKE.

To GEO. F. BRISTOW, Esq.

MR. JAMES M. WEHLI'S FAREWELL MATINEE.

The announcement of the Farewell Matinee of the celebrated and popular pianist, James M. Wehli, will create a sensation in our fashionable music world, and will attract a brilliant and overflowing audience to his Matinee at Wallack's Theatre to-day, Wednesday, at 2 o'clock p. m. Mr. Wehli's last Matinees, at the same place, were extraordinary successes, drawing out the very elite of society, when his splendid playing delighted and satisfied every one. He will be assisted by that admirable artist, Mr. Richard Hoffman, whose popularity in this city is unequalled, who will play with him Thalberg's great Norma duet, a performance which we consider the ultimate perfection of piano-forte playing. The other artists will be Mlle. Frida de Gebele, Mr. William Castle, and Mr. S. C. Campbell.

HAVANA GRAND OPERA COMPANY.

Mr. J. Grau, the director of the Havanna Grand Opera Company, announces a short season of Italian Opera of ten subscription nights, at the Academy of Music, commencing on Thursday, May 3. Subscriptions are received at the Box Office. Other particulars will be duly announced.

THE SUCCESSOR OF FIRTH, SON & Co.—Since the lamented death of the elder Mr. Firth and subsequently of his son and successor, the business has been carried on by the executors, under

the able direction of Mr. Wm. F. Sherwin. We are happy now to announce that the business has been purchased by Mr. Thaddeus Firth, the eldest son of the founder of the firm, who will carry on the concern, as heretofore, at 563 Broadway.

Mr. Thaddeus Firth was for many years in the business, and understands it thoroughly in all its details. He has a keen appreciation of the wants of the times, and the necessity for the constant production of novelties of the best description, and is determined to keep his house the first as it is the oldest business in the city, dating back over forty-five years. His extensive catalogue will be further enlarged by the addition of new and standard works, both American and foreign, so that all classes of teachers and purchasers will be able to furnish themselves with every class of musical composition, vocal and instrumental, for study, or for recreation. He has made ample arrangements for the importation of musical goods, which he will supply to his customers at importers' prices. He will continue the manufacture of instruments, and hopes to retain the supremacy which the old firm enjoyed over all other establishments.

Mr. Wm. F. Sherwin, who is widely known and everywhere popular, both here and in the provinces, is engaged as general business manager. He is just the man for a go-ahead house, and we have entire confidence in his judgment and tact in gaining customers and retaining them by promptitude, unwavering courtesy and polite attention.

We greet Mr. Firth on his return to his old business, and commend his establishment to the notice of our readers here, and throughout the country.

ARRIVAL OF MRS. WILLIAM VINCENT WALLACE. —We announce with sincere pleasure the arrival of that fine artist and most excellent lady Mme. William Vincent Wallace, the widow of our dearest friend, the celebrated composer Wallace. She has returned to this city, where she is so widely known and respected, and will resume the practice of the profession of which she is so bright an ornament. Mme. Wallace is an admirable pianist, she has few equals in the country, and she possesses the happy faculty of imparting instruction, and making work pleasant to the pupil. It needs no commendation from us to ensure Mme. W. V. Wallace a rush of pupils.

THE EVENING POST ON PIANOS.

We quote the following admirable article from the N. Y. *Evening Post*. The encomiums it passes on the Chickering Pianos, are simply iterations of the opinions of all the great artists who have visited this country.

CHICKERING'S PIANOS.

The piano-forte has kept steadily on in the march of improvement hand in hand with time. It has grown from a very small box with very limited resources to a full-grown instrument of great power, brilliancy, and beauty. It has undergone no wonderful revolution in form, no radical change in principle, but the one has been added to and the other modified by experiment and experience.

Jonas Chickering was one of the pioneers in the business, and his early success offered the first effectual check to the large importation of piano-fortes from Europe. At that period, and for many years after, the demand for pianos was very limited, so that as one after another manufacturer sprang up, following at a distance the lead of Chickering, it became possible to supply the home demand by home manufacture, and the public at length, believing in the sterling excellence of the American product, ceased to order from abroad, and the business of importing pianos died out, it being impossible to pursue it with profit.

For thirty years the house of Chickering was the foremost house in America, its business doubling that of any other maker, and through-

out the whole length and breadth of the country the name of "Chickering, Boston," was a talisman and a guaranty, which had penetrated into thousands of American homes, and was then as much a household word in proportion as it is this day, when its thirty thousand pianos are forever vocalizing the simple words "Chickering, Boston."

To Chickering & Sons the modern piano is indebted for its most important improvements. The entire iron frame was first used by Chickering & Sons, and was exhibited by them at the first great International Exhibition in London, where it created a profound excitement, receiving the first European medal ever awarded to an American piano-forte manufacturer, and the approval of all the eminent makers of Europe, who afterwards adopted the principle; thus giving rise to the expression "manufactured after the American plan."

Chickering & Sons first invented and introduced the "circular scale," from which springs all the present distinctive excellence of the American piano. The adoption of this scale, which the Chickering's generously left unpatented for the benefit of the entire trade, has given to the piano depth, power and beauty in quality of tone; in short, it has opened the way for the splendid characteristics which distinguish the piano of to-day from the piano of fifteen years ago.

The immense business done by Chickering & Sons necessitated manufacturing facilities in proportion, and led, a few years since, to the erection of their model, extensive and splendid manufactory in Boston, which is much the largest in the world, and has been imitated on a smaller scale by other manufacturers in this country; although the greater part of their wonderful labor-saving machinery, the invention of the Chickering's themselves, cannot be imitated, and is therefore not to be found elsewhere.

The application of agraffes and over-stringing are of European invention. Agraffes have been used there for over thirty, and here for many years. Chickering & Sons have used them in their grand, square and upright pianos for the past twelve years. Over-stringing was used in New York thirty-five years ago, by an Englishman named Jardine, and subsequently in Boston, but it was found of no value to instruments of that day, when the bass was as small and tinkling as the treble; but when the "circular scale" came to be developed, giving that magnificent sonority to the lower tones of the square pianos, the length of string afforded to the middle and upper notes by over-stringing became of manifest advantage, and was speedily adopted by all makers, it being a good thing, and the special property of no one. The principle became popularly known in London in 1851, when over-strung Russian pianos were exhibited at the great International Fair. Thus the "circular scale," discovered and applied by Chickering & Sons, made the over-stringing of value; and to that and nothing else, is traceable the present acknowledged superiority of American square pianos.

Chickering & Sons was the first firm in America that made grand pianos which could compete with the finest specimens of European manufacture. They stood alone among all other manufacturers, and steadily and surely, by the magnificent qualities of their grands, drove Broadwood, Pleyel and Erard out of every concert hall in America.

Formerly great European pianists who visited this country brought their special favorite instruments with them, not supposing that they could be supplied with a fitting instrument here. Now the European reputation of the Chickering grand pianos is so widely established by the concurrent opinions of Thalberg, De Meyer, Strakosch, Wallace, Benedict, Goldschmidt, Gottschalk, Hoffman, Wehli, and many other eminent artists, that foreign artists do not encumber themselves with foreign pianos, knowing that the Chick-

ing grands are equal in every respect to all the demands that could be made upon an instrument by the most exacting performer. Consequently all of the great artists who come to America invariably select the Chickering grand piano, as being the only one which satisfies all professional requirements.

The Chickering grand is not overstrung, as the space which the length and breadth of the instrument affords is sufficient for the production of the largest possible amount of sonority. In a grand piano the overstringing is rather a detriment than otherwise, producing in forte passages a confusion of vibration, which is fatal to the effect of pianists; whereas the straight run of the strings, as in the Chickering grands, and the ample space afforded, leaves the vibration of the strings clear and unimpeded, and affords the best conditions for the production of full and pure sound.

The æsthetic qualities of a good grand piano are immeasurably superior to those of the best square. They possess power and beauty which are unapproachable by any other form. The characteristics of the grand piano, as developed by Chickering & Sons, can be best understood by the following brief quotations from two of the most brilliant artists who ever visited America. Gottschalk, writing of the qualities of the Chickering piano, says:

"They have a wonderfully harmonious roundness of tone, force in the bass notes, limpidity in the upper notes, equality throughout all the registers, singing quality in the middle tones, and above all, an astonishing prolongation of sound, without its becoming confused. The upper notes are remarkable for a clearness and purity which I do not find in any other instrument, while the bass is distinguished for power without harshness, and for a magnificent sonority."

James M. Wehli, comparing Chickering's pianos with those of all other manufacturers, writes as follows:

"I have never known so noble a tone; it yields every expression that is needed in music, and its quality is capable of change to meet every sentiment. This is a rare power, and is derived from the perfect purity of its tone, together with its sympathetic, elastic and well-balanced touch. In depth, volume and power of tone it is equal to all demands, and however it is forced, it loses none of its original purity of tone, while in all the fine shades of sentiment, in the power of dramatic coloring and in passages of the greatest delicacy, it is all that the most exigent pianist can desire, and its softest whisper can be heard in the remotest corners of the largest halls, even when crowded. I believe that in every particular your pianos are, for the reasons given, superior to any I have ever seen in this country or in Europe."

More recently still, Poznanski, the pianist and composer, who has just returned from an eight years' residence in Paris, in the very heart of the influence of Erard, Pleyel and Herz, after trying other instruments of American manufacture, chose those of Chickering & Sons, and fully endorses the opinions of Gottschalk, Wehli, Thalberg and many others, in the following terms:

"NEW YORK, March 3, 1866.

"Messrs. Chickering & Sons:

"On my return to America after an absence of several years, I hastened to examine the various pianos of the best makers here. * * * The superiority of your grand pianos over all others which I have seen and thoroughly tested, rendered my decision in the matter as easy as prompt.

"I have recognized in your extraordinarily excellent instruments all those qualities of which Thalberg formerly spoke to me. * * *

"Your grand pianos well sustain the claim of your instruments to superiority over all others in this country. During the past eight years I have constantly played upon the justly celebra-